

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: September 21, 2026
Nelson Neighborhood Conservation Coalition
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The Nelson Neighborhood Conservation Coalition, a Wyoming nonprofit corporation, has been formed as a response to the Bridger-Teton National Forest development plan for the public lands near the Nelson Trailhead in east Jackson. On March 10, 2026, a group of concerned East Jackson neighbors gathered in Jackson to discuss issues related to the proposed 2025 development plan for the Nelson Residential Site on Nelson Drive. The discussion focused on how significantly the 2025 proposal diverges from the Final Decision issued in 2012 by Bridger-Teton National Forest (BTNF) Superintendent Jacqueline Buchanan. Many attendees believe the 2025 proposal represents an entirely new development plan that legally requires a new approval process under The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

The Coalition believes that public lands are under threat across the American West. A pattern has emerged where land managing agencies reopen or reverse long-standing decisions without reopening public comment. In this specific case, after an extensive public NEPA process, the BTNF issued a Final Decision Notice in 2012 concerning development at Nelson Drive. In 2025 the BTNF materially changed that decision without updating their analysis of impacts or giving the public an equivalent process to review and challenge the new project.

The BTNF issued a Special Use Permit to the Jackson Hole Housing Trust in 2025 in support of the new plan. The Coalition believes that the new plan ignores the commitment written into the 2012 plan to develop within the existing BTNF housing footprint, as shown by the 2025 planned expansion up the hillside into wild areas that are currently part of the Nelson Trailhead habitat. The 2025 plan also doubles the number of units, and provides rental housing for non-Forest-Service workers. These units would be on public land administered by a private non-profit (The Jackson Hole Housing Trust). Nothing like this was ever proposed, analyzed, or offered for public comment in the original Nelson Drive NEPA process. We feel there is the potential for this project to weaken the NEPA process in general and to set an alarming precedent eroding the intended use of public lands in other communities across the West that are adjacent to public lands.

The Coalition hired Attorney Austin Dunlap to file the necessary documents to join and strengthen a suit filed by Attorney Michael J. Clement. In January 2026 Clement filed a pro se lawsuit (Clement v. USDA Forest Service) to show "concrete injury" that would result from the BTNF development plan.

The Nelson Neighborhood Conservation Coalition has recently achieved a milestone. Our Motion to Intervene as of Right has been granted and thus the two suits are joined. Now the issue is whether the US District Court will make a ruling as to if the government followed the proper procedure in issuing to the Jackson Hole Housing Trust the Special Use Permit for the new development. The judge issued another order that the parties update the court by September 28, 2026 to submit all the documents, reports, permits, meeting notes etc. that were taken into consideration for making the decision to grant the Permit. That will give the court all of the information the Government used in making the decision. All parties will brief on the issues, and the Court can make a ruling whether the Government followed the proper procedure in issuing the permit.

Here is the description of the Nelson Neighborhood Conservation Coalition as filed in Court:

The Coalition was formed for the express purposes of: (a) preserving and protecting the environmental quality, natural resources, and economical integrity of the Nelson Drive area in Teton County, Wyoming, and surrounding National Forest System lands; (b) ensuring compliance with federal, state, and local environmental laws affecting the Nelson Drive area; (c) protecting and preserving public access to and enjoyment of the Nelson Drive Trailhead; (d) advocating for responsible land use planning consistent with the residential character of the Nelson Drive neighborhood; and (e) representing the interests of Nelson Drive area residents in administrative and judicial proceedings affecting environmental quality and land use in the neighborhood."

If you are interested in learning more or supporting this effort, the complete set of documents and maps and a link to donate can be found on the NNCC website: <https://nelsoncoalition.org>.